

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9950

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USMISSION USUN

DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2782

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PO PINT

SUBJ: JUNTA MEMBER GALVAO DE MELO TO QUIT GOVERNMENT,

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FOUND CENTER POLITICAL PARTY

SUMMARY: GEN GALVAO DE MELO, ONE OF MEMBERS NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA, HAS TOLD DCM THAT HE WILL SOON LEAVE JUNTA TO FOUND CENTRIST POLITICAL PARTY TO CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTION GENERAL SPINOLA AS PERMANENT PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC. THIS PARTY WILL ALSO SEEK TO EDUCATE "POLITICALLY INNOCENT" PORTUGUESE PEOPLE TO REALITIES OF COMMUNISM. SUPPORT FOR PARTY ENVISIONED FROM ALL SIDES, INCLUDING FAR RIGHT OF THE PAST. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH DCM JULY 1, GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO, ONE OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA, REVEALED H
ZWP HNS TO L
AVE THE JUNTA
AND FOUND A CENTER POLITICAL PARTY WHOSE AIM WOULD BE TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELECTION OF GENERAL SPINOLA AS PERMANENT PRESIDENT, AND HIMSELF AS VICE PRESIDENT.

2. GALVAO DE MELO SAID THESE PLANS ARE RESULT OF JOINT DECISION OF THREE JUNTA MEMBERS: HIMSELF, PRESIDENT SPINOLA AND GENERAL COSTA GOMES. HE SAID THAT REASON COSTA GOMES NOT SELECTED AS FUTURE PARTY CANDIDATE WAS BECAUSE HE WAS WEAK POLITICALLY (IMPLYING THAT HE LACKED THE PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF A CAMPAIGNER FOR PUBLIC OFFICE).

3. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO SAID THAT THE DECISION TO LAUNCH SUCH A PARTY HAD BEEN MADE AFTER MANY PEOPLE HAD CONTACTED HIM AND PRESIDENT SPINOLA TO EXPRESS THE NEED FOR A PARTY OF THE CENTER, AND AFTER IT HAD BECOME APPARENT TO HIM AND TO PRESIDENT SPINOLA THAT WHILE THOSE OF THIS POLITICAL PERSUASION WERE GOOD MEN AND POSSESSED ALL THE ECONOMIC POWER TO SUPPORT A PARTY, THEY HAD LIVED UNDER A SYSTEM IN WHICH THEY HAD BEEN FULLY PROTECTED FOR SO LONG THAT THEY WERE POLITICALLY INEPT. HAVING HAD THE PROTECTION OF THE FASCIST REGIME OF THE PAST, THEY NOW NEEDED THE PROTECTION OF GENERALS SPINOLA AND GALVAO DE MELO.

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4. DCM OBSERVED THAT GIVEN PORTUGAL'S PRESENT POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY, WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES ON OR CLAIMING TO BE ON THE LEFT, ANY PARTY THAT LAUNCHED ITSELF AND CALLED ITSELF "CENTRIST" WOULD IMMEDIATELY BECOME THE PARTY OF THE RIGHT AND WOULD BE ACCUSED AT LEAST OF BEING ON THE FAR RIGHT. GALVAO DE MELO ACKNOWLEDGED THIS, SAID THAT IN FACT THE PARTY HE PROPOSED WOULD START OFF AS A VERY SMALL ENTITY BUT WOULD GROW WITH ACQUISITIONS

FROM ALL SIDES, INCLUDING THE FAR RIGHT OF THE PAST.

5. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO SAID THAT THE TIMING FOR LAUNCHING THE PARTY HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED UPON. HE PLANS TO CONTINUE TO GIVE OCCASIONAL TALKS ON TELEVISION, THE NEXT IN ABOUT A WEEK'S TIME, AND AT SOME FUTURE POINT WOULD LEAVE THE JUNTA IN ORDER TO LAUNCH THE POLITICAL PARTY. IN THE MEANWHILE, HIS TELEVISION TALKS WOULD LAY THE BASIS AND RATIONALIZE THE NEED FOR A CENTRIST PARTY.

6. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO THEN GAVE A LENGTHY ANALYSIS OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE AS BEING BASICALLY A NON-POLITICAL ANIMAL. THIS HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED DURING THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD FROM 1911 TO 1926, DURING WHICH PORTUGAL HAD SHOWN THAT IT POSSESSED A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF MEN OF TALENT IN THE POLITICAL FIELD BUT WHO, REFLECTING THE BASICALLY EXTREME INDIVIDUALISM OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE, HAD EACH CONSTITUTED IN EFFECT HIS OWN POLITICAL PARTY. THEY WERE CONSTANTLY AT EACH OTHERS THROATS AND ENDED BY EATING EACH OTHER UP. THE MOST HEINOUS SIN OF THE 48 YEARS OF FASCISM WAS THE FACT THAT IT PREVENTED THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE FROM EVOLVING FROM THIS CHAOTIC INDIVIDUALISM INTO ORDERED DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL LIFE. THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE NOW WERE POLITICAL INNOCENTS. ALTHOUGH IT HURT HIM TO SAY SO, IGNORANCE AND LACK OF AWARENESS BY THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WERE SO GREAT THAT THERE WERE EVEN SOME ISOLATED AREAS WHERE PEOPLE THOUGHT THEY WERE STILL LIVING UNDER A KING.

7. DCM INTERJECTED THAT WE IN THE EMBASSY IN ATTEMPTING TO ANALYZE THE PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SCENE WERE AT A CONFIDENTIAL

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LOSS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT THE MAJORITY OF PORTUGUESE FEEL POLITICALLY. ON THE ONE HAND, ONE ASSUMES THAT THE PORTUGUESE ARE BASICALLY HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE AND THAT THEREFORE THEY WOULD REJECT COMMUNISM. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE POLITICAL INNOCENCE OF WHICH THE GENERAL HAD SPOKEN, IT WAS ALSO QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE, HAVING WITNESSED THE COMMUNIST PARTY BEHAVE IN A MOST HONORABLE AND RESPECTABLE MANNER, MIGHT DECIDE THAT THEY HAD BEEN MISLED IN THE PAST BY THE NOW-DISCREDITED FASCIST REGIME INTO THINKING THAT IF THE COMMUNIST PARTY WAS EVIL, AND MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOTHING WRONG WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND MIGHT EVEN C

TE FOR
THEO. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO SAID THAT THIS WAS
PRECISELY HIS POINT AND IT WAS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT
A CENTRIST PARTY BE ESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD EDUCATE
THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT COMMUNISM REALLY
MEANS.

8. DNM SAID THAT THE EMBASSY HAD HEARD SOME RUMORS TO
THE EFFECT THAT PRESIDENT SPINOLA, FEELING HIMSELF
HANDICAPPED BY THE LACK OF IWAUPLP SDV
NDATE, HAD
DECIDED TO SEEK S SNAPELECTNEN FOR PRESIDENT WITHIN A
MONTH OR SO. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO DENIED THAT THERE
WAS ANY TRUTH TO THIS RUMOR.
SCOTT

NOTE BY OC/T: TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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NNN

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